(a) whether there is any plan to increase the flights of Indian Airlines to other countries including the gulf countries;

(b) if so, the names of countries for which new flights are likely to be commenced and by when and the other details in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons for not increasing the flights inspite of the increasing demand?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c) Indian Airlines has recently introduced thrice weekly services to Dubai from Hyderabad.

More services by Sri Lanka Airlines

3056. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sri Lanka Airlines would operate more services in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the strategy of the Air India to face the challenge?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c) During last round of air services consultation between India and Sri Lanka held in New Delhi on 17-18th February, 2000, the designated airline of Sri Lanka has been allowed to utilize additional 745 seats per week out of the unused entitlement of the Indian side subject to a Code Share/Block Space arrangement with the designated Indian Carrier. The designated airline of Sri Lanka has also been granted access to Kolkata and Varanasi. Actual operations are however left to their commercial judgement.

Subsidy to Haj Pilgrims

3057. SHRI B.P. SINGHAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the nature of subsidy given to pilgrims going for Haj each year;

(b) when it was commenced for the first time;

(c) what was the cost per head;